NEWS RELEASE
STATE/FEDERAL DISASTER FIELD OFFICE
JOINT INFORMATION CENTER

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

STORM VICTIMS MUST REGISTER DIRECTLY WITH FEMA
TO BE ELIGIBLE FOR FEDERAL AND STATE DISASTER ASSISTANCE

EVERETT, WA – Homeowners, renters and non-agricultural business owners who sustained damage during the severe storms and flooding of October 15-23, 2003, must register directly with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) in order to be eligible for federal and state disaster aid.

It has been reported that storm victims who contacted the American Red Cross and/or the Washington Emergency Management Division regarding their storm losses are under the impression they are already registered for federal and state disaster aid. However, to be eligible for federal and state disaster assistance, it is <u>necessary</u> to call the FEMA toll-free registration line, **1-800-621-FEMA (3362)**. The speech or hearing impaired may call **TTY 1-800-462-7585**.

On November 7th, President Bush declared 15 northwestern Washington counties a disaster area as a result of the mid-October severe storms and flooding.
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The declared counties eligible for federal and state disaster assistance are Chelan, Clallam, Grays Harbor, Island, Jefferson, King, Kitsap, Mason, Okanogan, Pierce, San Juan, Skagit, Snohomish, Thurston and Whatcom. If you live in one of these counties and have suffered damage as a result of the October storms, you are urged to call the toll-free registration number listed above.

On March 1, 2003, FEMA became part of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. FEMA's continuing mission within the new department is to lead the effort to prepare the nation for all hazards and effectively manage federal response and recovery efforts following any national incident. FEMA also initiates proactive mitigation activities, trains first responders, and manages the National Flood Insurance Program and the U.S. Fire Administration.

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